

an agreement would remove a direct North Korean threat to the region and improve prospects for North-South reconciliation. It would also remove a major source of missiles and missile technology for countries such as Iran.

Getting an agreement will not be easy, but it helps a lot that we are not the only country which would benefit from the dismantlement of North Korea's missile program. Our allies South Korea and Japan, our European allies who already provide financial support for the Agreed Framework, the Chinese, the Russians, all share a desire to see North Korea devote its meager resources to food, not rockets. The only countries which want to see North Korea building missiles are its disreputable customers.

A tough, verifiable agreement to eliminate the North's long-range missile threat might be possible in exchange for reasonable U.S. assistance that would help North Korea feed itself and help convert missile plants to peaceful manufacturing.

Some people are impatient for change in North Korea. They want to adopt a more confrontational approach, including rushing ahead to deploy an unproven, hugely expensive, and potentially destabilizing national missile defense system.

I understand their frustration and share their desire for action against the threat of North Korean ballistic missiles.

But foreclosing diplomatic options by rushing to deploy NMD is not the right antidote. Sure, a limited ground-based national missile defense might someday be capable of shooting down a handful of North Korean missiles aimed at Los Angeles, but it will do nothing to defend our Asian allies from a North Korean missile attack.

Nor will it defend us from a nuclear bomb smuggled into the country aboard a fishing trawler or a biological toxin released into our water supply. NMD will not defend U.S. forces on Okinawa or elsewhere in the Pacific theater. It will do nothing to prevent North Korea from wielding weapons of mass destruction against Seoul, much of which is actually within artillery range of North Korea.

Moreover, a rush to deploy an unproven national missile defense, particularly absent a meaningful strategic dialog with China, could jeopardize the cooperative role China has played in recent years on the Korean Peninsula. Given our common interest in preventing North Korea from becoming a nuclear weapons power, the United States and China should work in concert, not at cross purposes.

OPENING NORTH KOREAN EYES

North Korea's opening has given the North Korean people a fresh look at the outside world—like a gopher coming out of its hole—with consequences which could be profound over the long haul. Hundreds of foreigners are in North Korea today, compared with a handful just a few years ago.

Foreigners increasingly are free to travel widely in the country and talk to average North Koreans without government interference. North Korea has even begun to issue tourist visas. The presence of foreigners in North Korea is gradually changing North Korean attitudes about South Korea and the West.

One American with a long history of working in North Korea illustrated the change underway by describing an impromptu encounter he had recently.

While he was out on an unescorted morning walk, a North Korean woman approached him and said, "You're not a Russian, are you? You're a Miguk Nom aren't you?"

Her expression translates roughly into "You're an American imperialist bastard, eh?"

The American replied good-naturedly, "Yes, I am an American imperialist bastard."

To which the woman replied quite sincerely, "Thanks very much for the food aid!"

Another American, a State Department official accompanying a World Food Program inspection team, noted that hundreds of people along the road waved and smiled, and in the case of soldiers, saluted, as the convoy passed.

He also reports that many of 80 million woven nylon bags used to distribute grain and emblazoned with the letters "U.S.A." are being recycled by North Koreans for use as everything from back-packs to rain coats. These North Koreans become walking billboards of American aid and generosity of spirit.

North Korea is just one critical challenge in a region of enormous importance to us. We cannot separate our policy there from our overall approach in East Asia.

We cannot hope that decisions we make about national missile defense, Taiwan policy, or support for democracy and rule of law in China will be of no consequence to developments on the Korean Peninsula. To the contrary, we need to think holistically and comprehensively about East Asia policy.

Our interests are vast. Roughly one-third of the world's population resides in East Asia. In my lifetime, East Asia has gone from less than 3 percent of the world GDP in 1950 to roughly 25 percent today.

Four of our 10 largest trading partners—Japan, China, Taiwan, and South Korea, are in East Asia.

Each of those trading partners is also one of the world's top ten economies as measured by gross domestic product. China, Japan, and South Korea together hold more than \$700 billion in hard currency reserves—half of the world's total.

East Asia is a region of economic dynamism. Last year Singapore, Hong Kong, and South Korea grew by more than 10 percent, shaking off the East Asian financial crisis and resuming their characteristic vitality. U.S. exports to the region have grown dra-

matically in recent years. U.S. exports to Southeast Asia, for instance, surpass our exports to Germany and are double our exports to France. U.S. direct investment in East Asia now tops \$150 billion, and has tripled over the past decade.

And of course these are just a few of the raw economic realities which underscore East Asia's importance. The United States has important humanitarian, environmental, energy, and security interests throughout the region.

We have an obligation, it seems to me, not to drop the ball. We have a vital interest in maintaining peace and stability in East Asia. We have good friends and allies—like President Kim Dae Jung of South Korea—who stand ready to work with us toward that goal. It is vital that we not drop the ball; miss an opportunity to end North Korea's deadly and destabilizing pursuit of long range missiles. I don't know that an agreement can be reached. In the end North Korea may prove too intransigent, too truculent, for us to reach an accord.

But I hope the Bush administration will listen closely to President Kim today, and work with him to test North Korea's commitment to peace. We should stay the course on an engagement policy that has brought the peninsula to the brink, not of war, but of the dawning of a brave new day for all the Korean people.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from California is recognized.

THE ISRAELI ELECTION AND ITS AFTERMATH

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, today a new government has been formed in Israel under the leadership of Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, with Shimon Peres as Foreign Minister and the broad-based participation of many across Israel's political spectrum.

I would like to take a few minutes today to share my assessment of the present situation, where things stand, and what this may mean for U.S. policy in the region. I rise today as one who has supported the peace process, believed that a peace agreement was possible, and who has worked in the Senate, along with many of my colleagues, to see that the United States played an active role in helping Israel and the Palestinians seek peace.

Prime Minister Ehud Barak was elected two years ago to make peace and to bring about an "end of the conflict" with both Syria and the Palestinians. He was elected with a mandate to complete the Oslo process, a goal at the time supported by the majority of the people of Israel.

Over the past two years Prime Minister Barak tried, heroically and energetically, to achieve a comprehensive peace with both parties.

Indeed, it has been said I believe, that Prime Minister Barak went further than any other Israeli Prime Minister in an attempt to reach a comprehensive agreement with the Palestinians which includes:

The creation of a Palestinian state;

Palestinian control of all of Gaza;

Palestinian control of approximately 94 to 95 percent of the West Bank, and territorial compensation for most of the other five percent;

A division of Jerusalem, with Palestinian control over the Arab neighborhoods in East Jerusalem and the possibility of a Palestinian capitol in Jerusalem; and

Shared sovereignty arrangements for the Temple Mount.

The issue of Palestinian refugees, was addressed with tens of thousands of Palestinians to be allowed into Israel as part of a family reunification program, and compensation in the tens of billions of dollars provided to other Palestinian refugees as well.

Not only was the Palestinian response to these unprecedented offers "no," but, even as Prime Minister Barak attempted to engage Chairman Yasser Arafat at the negotiation table, the Palestinians took to a campaign of violence in the streets, and threatened to unilaterally declare an independent Palestinian state:

When the violence began, the Fatah's militia, the Tanzim, fired upon Israelis with submachine guns. The Fatah and the Tanzim have been active in the violence—even encouraging its escalation—to this day;

Chairman Arafat freed a number of Hamas terrorists who instantly turned around and vowed violence against Israel;

The Palestinian media, under the control of the Palestinian Authority, has been used to disseminate inciting material, providing encouragement to damage holy Jewish sites, to kill Israelis, and carry out acts of terror; and,

Palestinian schools were closed down by the Palestinian Authority allowing Palestinian children to participate in the riots and violence.

And in reaction, all too often, Israel, too, has resorted to violence in an effort to protect its security and safeguard the lives of its people.

This new Intifadah has been characterized by a level of hate and violence that, frankly, I did not believe possible in view of the extensive concessions Israel had offered.

And it is clear, I believe, that much of this campaign of violence, this new Intifadah which continues to this day, has been coordinated and planned.

Because I was at the World Economic Forum meeting in Davos two months ago which was also attended by Shimon Peres and Yasser Arafat, I read with great interest Tom Friedman's op-ed in The New York Times 3 weeks ago.

As Mr. Friedman's column reports, when Mr. Peres extended the olive

branch to Mr. Arafat at Davos, "Mr. Arafat torched it."

I urge all of my colleagues to read Thomas Friedman's op-ed article: "Sharon, Arafat and Mao," which I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the New York Times, Feb. 8, 2001]

SHARON, ARAFAT AND MAO

(By Thomas L. Friedman)

So I'm at the Davos World Economic Forum two weeks ago, and Shimon Peres walks by. One of the reporters with him asks me if I'm going to hear Mr. Peres and Yasir Arafat address the 1,000 global investors and ministers attending Davos. No, I tell him, I have a strict rule, I'm only interested in what Mr. Arafat says to his own people in Arabic. Too bad, says the reporter, because the fix is in. Mr. Peres is going to extend an olive branch to Mr. Arafat. Mr. Arafat is going to do the same back and the whole love fest will get beamed back to Israel to boost the peace process and Ehud Barak's re-election. Good, I'll catch it on TV, I said.

Well, Mr. Peres did extend the olive branch, as planned, but Mr. Arafat torched it. Reading in Arabic from a prepared text, Mr. Arafat denounced Israel for its "facist military aggression" and "colonialist armed expansionism," and its policies of "murder, persecution, assassination, destruction and devastation."

Mr. Arafat's performance at Davos was a seminal event, and is critical for understanding Ariel Sharon's landslide election. What was Mr. Arafat saying by this speech, with Mr. Peres sitting by his side? First, he was saying that there is no difference between Mr. Barak and Mr. Sharon. Because giving such a speech on the eve of the Israeli election, in the wake of an 11th-hour Barak bid to conclude a final deal with the Palestinians in Tabá, made Mr. Barak's far-reaching offer to Mr. Arafat look silly. Moreover, Mr. Arafat was saying that there is no difference between Mr. Peres and Mr. Sharon, because giving such a speech just after the warm words of Mr. Peres made Mr. Peres look like a dupe, as all the Israeli papers reported. Finally, at a time when Palestinians are starving for work, Mr. Arafat's subliminal message to the global investors was: Stay away.

That's why the press is asking exactly the wrong question about the Sharon election. They're asking, who is Ariel Sharon? The real question is, who is Yasir Arafat? The press keeps asking: Will Mr. Sharon become another Charles de Gaulle, the hard-line general who pulled the French Army out of Algeria? Or will he be Richard Nixon, the anti-Communist who made peace with Communist China? Such questions totally miss the point.

Why? Because Israel just had its de Gaulle. His name was Ehud Barak. Mr. Barak was Israel's most decorated soldier. He abstained in the cabinet vote over the Oslo II peace accords. But once in office he changed 180 degrees. He offered Mr. Arafat 94 percent of the West Bank for a Palestinian state, plus territorial compensation for most of the other 6 percent, plus half of Jerusalem, plus restitution and resettlement in Palestine for Palestinian refugees. And Mr. Arafat not only said no to all this, but described Israel as "facist" as Mr. Barak struggled for re-election. It would be as though de Gaulle had offered to withdraw from Algeria and the Algerians said: "Thank you. You're a fascist. Of course we'll take all of Algeria, but we won't stop

this conflict until we get Bordeaux, Marseilles and Nice as well."

If the Palestinians don't care who Ariel Sharon is, why should we? If Mr. Arafat wanted an Israeli leader who would not force him to make big decisions, which he is incapable of making, why should we ask whether Mr. Sharon is going to be de Gaulle and make him a big offer? What good is it for Israel to have a Nixon if the Palestinians have no Mao?

The Oslo peace process was about a test. It was about testing whether Israel had a Palestinian partner for a secure and final peace. It was a test that Israel could afford, it was a test that the vast majority of Israelis wanted and it was a test Mr. Barak courageously took to the limits of the Israeli political consensus—and beyond. Mr. Arafat squandered that opportunity. Eventually, Palestinians will ask for a makeup exam. And eventually Israelis may want to give it to them, if they again see a chance to get this conflict over with. But who knows what violence and pain will be inflicted in the meantime?

All we know is that for now, the Oslo test is over. That is what a vast majority of Israelis said in this election. So stop asking whether Mr. Sharon will become de Gaulle. That is not why Israelis elected him. They elected him to be Patton. They elected Mr. Sharon because they know exactly who he is, and because seven years of Oslo have taught them exactly who Yasir Arafat is.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, Mr. Friedman makes a simple but profound point. He writes that many "are asking exactly the wrong question about the Sharon election. They're asking, who is Ariel Sharon? The real question is, who is Yasser Arafat?"

He continues, "the press keeps asking: Will Mr. Sharon become another Charles de Gaulle . . . or will he be Richard Nixon, the anti-Communist who made peace with Communist China?"

So we naturally ask the question, will Ariel Sharon reach out to the Palestinians? As Tom Friedman points out, this is exactly the wrong way to look at Ariel Sharon or the recent election.

Why? Because Israel just had its de Gaulle. His name was Ehud Barak. Mr. Barak was Israel's most decorated soldier. He abstained in the cabinet vote over the Oslo II peace accords. But once in office he changed 180 degrees. He offered Mr. Arafat 94 percent of the West Bank for a Palestinian state . . . plus half of Jerusalem . . . and Mr. Arafat not only said no to all this, but described Israel as "facist" as Mr. Barak struggled for re-election.

Mr. Friedman continues to state what has become clear: "What good is it for Israel to have a Nixon if the Palestinians have no Mao?"

As someone who has been a supporter of the Oslo process from the start, I say this with a great deal of regret. And I wish this were not the case. But we have seen Israel make the offer, an historic offer, only to have it rebuffed. The consequences of this could, in fact, be devastating.

In his victory speech, Prime Minister Sharon called on the Palestinians "to cast off the path of violence and to return to the path of dialogue" while acknowledging that "peace requires painful compromises on both sides."

Mr. Sharon has said that he favors a long-term interim agreement with the Palestinians since a comprehensive agreement is not now possible because the Palestinians have shown they are not ready to conclude such an agreement.

He has stated that he accepts a demilitarized Palestinian state, is committed to improving the daily lives of the Palestinians, and has reportedly indicated that he does not plan to build new West Bank settlements.

Whatever happens, there can be little doubt that it will have a profound impact on United States strategic interests in the Middle East. And because of that, the United States must remain an interested party in the region.

I believe that it is critical that both parties need to make every effort to end the current cycle of provocation and reaction, with a special responsibility that is incumbent upon the Palestinian Authority to seek an end to the riots, the terror, the bombings, and the shootings. There must be a "time out" on violence before the situation degenerates further into war.

We can all remember the images, from last fall, of the Palestinian child hiding behind his father, caught in the cross-fire, shot to death, and then the images, a few days later, the pictures of the Israeli soldier who was beaten while in custody and thrown out of a second floor window of the police station, to be beaten to death by the mob below.

It is easy to understand how passions can run high, and frustration and fear can drive violence.

But it is also easy to see how these feelings—even these feelings, that are based in legitimate aspiration—can get out of control and lead to ever deeper, and never-ending, cycles of violence.

The Palestinian leadership must make every effort to end this cycle, to quell the attitude of hate that has been fostered among the Palestinian people, and to act to curb the violence, and to convince Israel that they are indeed serious and sincere about pursuing peace.

But until there is evidence that the violence is ending, the United States cannot be productively engaged between the two parties.

If both Israel and the Palestinians can make progress in curbing or ending the violence, the United States can play an important role in helping to shape intermediate confidence-building measures between Israel and the Palestinians. The current environment makes a comprehensive agreement impossible, but proximity gives the Israelis and the Palestinians no choice but to learn to live together. The alternative is clearly war.

And the United States must continue to work together with Israel to strengthen the bilateral relationship, to ensure that Israel has the tools it needs to defend itself, and to enhance security in the region.

There are those who now believe that the Palestinians don't want peace;

that, in fact, they want to continue the violence, and force Israel into the sea; to take back Jaffa; to take back Haifa.

There is a segment of the population that believes this is true. But I say, how realistic is this? Can there be any doubt that Israel has the ability to defend itself, and will? Or that should there be an effort to attack Israel, to end this democracy, that the United States would be fully involved? There is no doubt of that.

So the ball is now in the Palestinian court, to show that Palestinians are interested in ending violence and bloodshed. Israel, under Barak, has shown how far it will go to search for peace, much further than I ever thought possible. The concessions offered at Camp David, and after, are testament, I believe, to Israel's desire and commitment for peace. But to seek to force peace in light of hostility and hatred on the streets is neither realistic nor sustainable.

The Sharon election, I believe, can be seen as a referendum on Arafat's actions and policies, and the Palestinian violence, and it must be taken seriously by the Palestinians if the peace process is to ever get back on track.

Just last summer, the 7-year-old peace process seemed on the verge of success, but the chairman walked away from the deal at the last moment.

I hope that someday soon Chairman Arafat will realize the profound disservice that he has done his people, and the people of the world, that he will realize that the framework for peace was on the table, that he will realize that continued violence is not the way to achieve the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people, and that continued violence will not gain him or his people additional concessions at the negotiating table.

And I believe that if and when he does realize this, when he takes action to bring the current violence to an end, he will find that Israel remains a partner in the search for peace in the Middle East, with the United States as a facilitator.

Until then, however, the United States must be clear that we continue to stand with Israel, an historic ally and partner in the search for security and peace in the Middle East.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. INHOFE). The Senator from Arkansas.

AGRICULTURE DISASTER ASSISTANCE

Mrs. LINCOLN. Mr. President, I rise today to bring attention to an issue Washington, and the American public, too often take for granted—something that is near and dear to my heart, and a part of my heritage. I am talking about American agriculture. This country needs a wake-up call. Americans believe that their bacon, lettuce, and tomatoes are raised somewhere in the back of the local grocery store. As the daughter of a seventh generation

Arkansas farm family, I know where our food supply is produced. It is grown in rural communities by families working from dusk until dawn to make ends meet. Unfortunately, too many in Washington continue to pay lip-service to our Nation's agricultural industry without actually providing them the tools and assistance they need to sustain their way of life.

I recognize the hurt that is evident in our agricultural communities. I know that commodity prices are at record lows and input costs, including fertilizer, energy, and fuel, are at record highs. No corporation in the world could make it today receiving the same prices it received during the Great Depression, yet, we are asking our farmers to do just that.

I am here to enlighten this body on the needs of our agricultural community. And it is my intention to come to the Senate floor often this year to highlight various issues affecting our Nation's farmers and ranchers.

In the interest of fairness, I will give credit where credit is due. In recent years, Congress has recognized that farmers are suffering, and we have delivered emergency assistance to our struggling agricultural community. Arkansas' farmers could not have survived without this help. Nearly 40 percent of net farm income came from direct Government payments during the 2000 crop year. The trouble with this type of ad hoc approach is that farmers and creditors across this country never really know how or when the Government is going to step in and help them.

Many of my farmers are scared to death that the assistance that has been available in the past will be absent this year because the tax cut and other spending programs have a higher priority.

I will highlight my frustration with our Nation's farm policy in the near future, but today I want to bring the Senate's attention to a matter that should have been handled long ago, yet still remains unaddressed. Our farmers need the disaster assistance that Congress provided last Fall. President Clinton signed the FY 2001 Agriculture Appropriations Act on October 28, 2000. Included in this legislation was an estimated \$1.6 billion in disaster payments for 2000 crop losses due to weather-related damages. These payments are yet to arrive in the farmer's mailbox. My phone lines are lit up with calls from farmers and bankers asking me when these payments are going to arrive. In the South, our growing season begins earlier than many parts of the country, and our farmers could head to the field right now to begin work on the 2001 crop, if they just had their operating loan. The trouble is, many of them are unable to cash flow a loan for 2001 because they still await USDA assistance to pay off the banker for last year's disaster.

I reference the South's growing season because many of our farm State Senators are from the Midwest, and